

IRRIGATION OF CERTAIN LANDS IN NEBRASKA

FEBRUARY 27, 1925.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. SMITH, from the Committee on Irrigation and Reclamation, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 12391]

The Committee on Irrigation and Reclamation, to whom was referred the bill H. R. 12391, have carefully considered the same and recommend its passage with the following amendments:

Page 2, line 14, strike out the word "proper."

Page 2, line 14, after the word "legislation," insert the following: "satisfactory to the Secretary of the Interior and until such legislation and the States guarantee herein required shall have been held valid by final decree of a court of competent jurisdiction."

Page 2, line 15, strike out the words "reclamation fund" and insert in lieu thereof the words "United States."

Page 2, line 17, strike out the words "said reclamation fund" and insert in lieu thereof the words "the United States."

Page 2, line 19, after the word "repayment," insert the words "to the United States."

Page 2, line 22, strike out the words "reclamation fund" and insert in lieu thereof the words "United States."

Page 2, line 23, after the word "district," insert the words "or districts."

Page 2, line 25, strike out the words "reclamation fund" and insert in lieu thereof the words "United States," and after the word "the" at the end of line 25, insert the word "entire."

Page 3, line 9, strike out the word "seventy" and insert in lieu thereof the word "forty-one."

The proposed legislation provides for the diversion of waters from the Platte River in Nebraska, which are now going to waste, for the purpose of irrigating lands in south central Nebraska, situated between the Platte and Republican Rivers.

A resolution was passed by the Sixty-seventh Congress authorizing a survey of the lands contained in the tract proposed to be irrigated, to be made by the engineers in the Reclamation Bureau. A complete survey and report upon the project has been made to the Reclamation Bureau of the Department of Interior by its engineers. The plan designed by the Reclamation engineers contemplates the erection of two large storage reservoirs containing 509,000 acre-feet of water and the irrigation of 450,000 acres of land in the counties of Gosper, Dawson, Phelps, Kearney, and Adams in the State of Nebraska.

These reservoirs and the dams that create them will develop 60,000 horsepower of hydroelectric power as a part of the project. The proceeds from the disposal of this power will go far toward ultimately paying for the cost of the project.

The lands to be irrigated are naturally very fertile, crossed and paralleled by a number of important railroads, viz, Chicago, Burlington & Quincy; Union Pacific; Northwestern; Missouri Pacific; and St. Joseph & Grand Island. They are close enough to Omaha and other Missouri River market centers to have good market facilities for everything produced.

The lands are already occupied, well farmed and improved, and are adapted to irrigation because of their topography and the peculiar quality of the soil, which easily absorbs moisture and gives it back for feeding plant life. Soil experts state that the loess soils of this plain are as rich in natural fertility as can be found in the entire country.

No better farmers can be found than those on the lands under the proposed project. All the land is in cultivation and their assessed valuation for State taxation is over \$150,000,000.

The report of the Agricultural Department upon the effect of the application of the proposed amount of additional water from the Platte River shows that the production of the lands so irrigated will be increased from two to fourfold. It will also make easy the rotation of crops and maintain the fertility of the soil by the growing of legumes such as alfalfa and clovers and the profitable production of sugar beets.

There are many fine towns and cities located in the counties mentioned in the project. The report of the agricultural experts of the Department of Agriculture shows that 12 inches of water per annum applied to the land in addition to the average rainfall will bring maximum production. In addition to these agricultural advantages the storage of the water necessary to furnish this addition to the natural rainfall will prevent overflow in flood time and develop valuable power that now goes to waste.

Under the terms of the bill as reported by the committee the State of Nebraska must provide legislation to guarantee the United States against the possibility of loss for moneys advanced to construct the storage and irrigation works, upon which 4 per cent interest is to be paid upon all funds furnished by the United States. The administration and expenditure of all moneys used is completely in the control of the Bureau of Reclamation. The project will inaugurate a new and effective plan for extending the advantages of Government and State cooperation in providing for a worthy irrigation project.